

**Minutes**  
**STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING**  
**2:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 17, 2008**  
**Indiana State Department of Agriculture**  
**Conference Room B**  
**101 West Ohio Street**  
**Indianapolis, IN 46204**

**Attendance**

**SSCB Members**

Nola Gentry  
Bob Eddleman  
Larry Clemens  
Warren Baird  
Bill Mann  
Gary Conant  
Jim Cherry via speaker phone

Kelly Gentry, ISDA  
Deb Fairhurst, ISDA  
Amy Eizinger, ISDA  
Andy Miller, ISDA  
Elisha Modisett, ISDA  
Robert Woodling, Monroe SWCD  
Jennifer Boyle, IASWCD  
Mike Cox, NRCS

**Audience**

Tammy Lawson, ISDA  
Cris Goode, ISDA

**2:05 PM: Call to order**

Nola Gentry welcomed everyone to the June 17, 2008 meeting.

**Draft Minutes of March 2008**

**Bill Mann moved to approve the minutes as presented. Gary Conant seconded and the motion carried.**

**2008 Disaster Briefing**

ISDA Director Andy Miller briefed everyone on the 2008 flooding disaster. He reported this flood will go down in history as the worst flood we have ever seen. Last week Miller and Governor Daniels spent a day traveling down south touring nonresidential areas. He stated there was water everywhere and every area has been affected. From an agriculture aspect this is the widest disaster we have ever had. People lost their homes, barns, equipment, farms, land and livestock. There's probably no sector of our state that's been hit harder than our farmers.

This disaster has had a significant impact and is at the top of ISDA's priorities. Miller also reported for the past ten days the agriculture conglomerate, including ISDA, IDEM, FSA, DNR, NRCS, SWCDs, BOAH, and the list goes on, have been working very closely to get everything back on the right track.

**ISDA Roles/ DSC Roles – Andy Miller**

Miller reported Tammy Lawson and everyone at ISDA have been working directly with IDEM to come up with solutions to provide assistance to farmers. We have also been spending time working with USDA to get assistance to farmers more effectively.

ISDA will also be meeting with Governor Daniels today or tomorrow to discuss conservation issues that have been directly effected by the flooding disaster.

Miller also reported another issue farmers are facing is replanting. Miller stated he can honestly say there will be no replanting in some of the areas of the state. Farmers are reporting the water is too deep and will not dry out in time for farmers to get back in the field.

Miller believed the biggest issue we will face will be getting farmers to stop what they are doing and get them to come into the service centers to sign up for assistance.

Larry Clemens asked if USDA has been responding to the Governors' requests. Miller replied that USDA has been very good to work with. They have already extended crop certifications, with several other items pending.

Clemens also asked if we are educating the districts on ways to help. Lawson replied yes.

Lawson reported our Resource Specialists are reaching out to all of their SWCDs, especially those that have been directly affected by the flooding, and providing assistance and making sure they have everything they need.

Lawson also explained the need to be flexible on state programs like CWI. She stated these needs will be long term and could extend beyond two to three years.

Miller asked the SSCB for their help. We need to offer as much help as we can to affected areas and make that assistance easy to access and responsive to immediate needs.

#### **Assessment of Disaster – Tammy Lawson**

Mann stated he has been affected personally by the flooding.

Warren Baird commented that he has been very fortunate in his area. Other places he has seen have been terrible; however, he doesn't think this flooding will cause a total wipeout.

Lawson reported on the first Saturday when Home Land Security (HLS) called and asked for help in the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) it was clear that soil conservation was going to be a priority. Ken Klemme, ISDA Deputy Director, went to the EOC that first weekend to provide assistance.

Miller mentioned Lt. Governor Skillman stated the gullies she saw on their tours were the most devastating land issues she has ever seen.

**Federal, State and Local Programs – Tammy Lawson**

Lawson briefed the board on the types of programs that are available to help farmers with their emergency needs and talked about ISDA's efforts to get the information out.

**Press Release: USDA Responds Quickly to Indiana Farmers' Needs – See Attachment**

**Governor Daniel's Discussion with USDA Secretary Schafer – See Attachment**

**Emergency Watershed Program Fact Sheet – See Attachment**

Mike Cox, NRSC, stated efforts are currently being focused on emergency issues like roads, bridges, homes and levees.

**Extending Crop Reporting Dates from USDA– See Attachment**

**HUC 8 Watersheds Affected by White River – See Attachment**

**Federal Disaster Areas – See Attachment**

**Ag Funding for Disaster Areas – See Attachment**

**Emergency Loan Program Fact Sheet – See Attachment**

**Emergency Conservation Program Fact Sheet – See Attachment**

**Financial Impact Determination – Tammy Lawson**

**Assessment of Private Disaster Relief Needs: Soil, Water and Agriculture – See Attachment**

**Example of Damage in Owen, Greene and Daviess County – See Attachment**

**Example of Specific Request for Assistance: Email from Paul Wehmeier, Executive Assistant to the Director and Deputy Director, to Director Andy Miller and Tammy Lawson on Levee Damage Assistance – See Attachment**

**Federal Disaster Counties: Land Cover and Floodplains – See Attachment**

**22 County Spreadsheet of Acres in Floodplains and Acres Eligible for Flood Assistance – See Attachment**

Lawson briefed the board on the land and property damage assessment that the DSC was requested to collect as quickly as possible. The rough estimate of \$200M in land rehabilitation cost was gathered by the DSS Team and RSS Team by talking to local officials and individual farmers in the primary disaster counties. The estimate is preliminary and does not include crop damage or wind/tornado damage to property.

Jim Cherry asked if acres in a floodplain are able to apply for funding. Baird replied some acres are able to receive funding. Crop insurance will cover a lot of the commodity lost.

More discussion followed on the average cost per acre needed.

**Review of CWI Emergency Requests – Amy Eizinger**

Greene County CWI Amendment Request – See Attachment

Clemens stated some of the practices they listed could be covered by USDA funding. Eizinger stated Greene County currently has 95% of those funds and have not spent any.

Gentry noted it is too early for them to determine their exact plan of action.

Bob Eddleman stated this is a situation where we will have to put our complete trust into the SWCD to use the funds in a productive way. We will need to ask for a report or documentation to let us know what they are planning on doing and where the funds go.

Clemens recommended that counties that have been declared disaster areas be able to redirect CWI funds to help with conservation issues caused by the flood. The rest of the board agreed.

Discussion followed on CWI contract guidelines. Lawson and Eizinger will work with the administration to determine a process for amending the contracts and for SWCD oversight and accountability.

**Eddleman made a motion to allow SWCD supervisors in federal disaster counties both primary and contiguous the ability to use 2008 CWI grant money for conservation issues that are directly related to the recent flooding. Mann seconded.**

Discussion followed on setting guidelines for what the money will be used for and how to report it. Eizinger will create a press release to send to SWCDs. The board came to consensus to do a blanket amendment for those counties.

**Motion carried.**

Monroe County CWI Amendment Request – See Attachment

Lawson asked Robert Woodling, Monroe County, to speak about the issues in their county. Woodling stated that it is very wet. The ground is still very saturated. Monroe County lost 60% of their corn crop and 20% of beans. He stated the SWCD wants to help our farmers get back on their feet and get back to a semi normal life.

Eddleman asked if we should slow down CREP and help take care of flooding issues first.

Lawson stated we had to follow that path that USDA already gave us.

More discussion followed on CREP's potential role in flood assistance.

Lawson mentioned we need to get the word out to farmers and get them in and get them signed up for funding assistance.

She also suggested assigning a board member or two to make decision on flooding issues until the board meets again in July. This will save everyone else from having to come in every time a decision needs to be made.

Cherry suggested Lawson be in charge of making decisions and keep to board informed. She mentioned the board has the right to turn over control to a director, but board involvement is very important.

More discussion followed on scheduling meetings and the need to move quickly on flood responses.

Cherry suggested the board give empowerment to the Executive Committee to make decision on flooding issues until the entire board meets again.

**Clemens made a motion to allow the Executive Committee to make decisions on behalf of the board for emergency and disaster issues between now and the next board meeting. Under extreme situations the Executive Committee will contact the rest of the board members for their opinions, but only the executive committee will have the right to vote on disaster issues. Cherry seconded. Discussion followed and the motion carried.**

#### **Next Steps**

**Next Meeting: July 8, 2008 at ISDA**

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 PM